

State of Texas v. Lincoln Academy et al

The Office of Attorney General filed a lawsuit against Lincoln Academy in 2014 for deceptive business practices. The case has been settled. As part of the settlement, Lincoln Academy has agreed to close down operations. A portion of the settlement monies are dedicated to restitution for consumers. For more information about the settlement and restitution, see the press release, dated August 13, 2014, at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov and Frequently Asked Questions under the Consumer Protection tab. A copy of the Agreed Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction is attached.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Are all Lincoln Academy customers eligible to participate in the refund program?

A: Consumers who paid money to Lincoln Academy may be eligible for a *pro rata* refund from the settlement. You will be notified by the Office of the Attorney General and will need to file a claim.

Q. I paid additional funds for various products and services that I did not receive from Lincoln Academy. Am I eligible for the refund program?

A. Yes.

Q: How much of a refund will Lincoln Academy customers receive?

A: The amount of each consumer's refund is based on two factors: the amount the customer paid Lincoln Academy as well as the number of victims applying for refunds.

Q: How do I claim my refund?

A: Our office will be emailing Lincoln Academy's customers using the email address they gave to Lincoln Academy. That email will explain the process, so be on the lookout for any emails from the Office of the Attorney General during the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015.

Q: If I have previously filed a complaint, do I still need to file a claim?

A: To ensure your participation, make sure you file a claim.

Q: If I don't receive a refund email, what should I do?

A: You should fill out a complaint form online at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/consumer/complain.shtml> . Make sure you include all of your contact information, including your email address if you have one, and the approximate amount you paid Lincoln Academy.

Q: What if I paid with a credit card or a debit card?

A: You are still eligible for a refund. You may also want to contact your credit card company about reversal of the charges. Lincoln Academy charges may appear as "Lincoln" or "Momentive Group" on your statement.

Q: What kind of documentation do I need to support my refund claim?

A: Our office may need to verify your eligibility for a claim at a later date, so make sure you keep all Lincoln Academy emails and documentation.

Q: How long will it take for me to receive my refund?

A: No payments will be made until after the deadline to file claims has passed and all of the claims have been reviewed. Estimated time of payment is the first quarter of 2015.

Q: What should I expect once I file a claim? Who will contact me and when?

A: Once you have filed a claim, you should receive a letter or email from the Office of the Attorney General confirming receipt. It is unlikely that you will hear anything else from our office until it is time for the payments to be mailed. Your payment, if you are eligible, will be sent to the address you provide to us.

Q: Because my school doesn't accept Lincoln Academy diplomas, I'm out a lot more money for expenses such as my apartment deposit. Can I get a bigger refund?

A: The settlement only provides reimbursement for monies paid by consumers to Lincoln Academy. It does not cover other losses. You may wish to contact a private attorney for advice about your rights.

Q. As the parent of a Lincoln Academy student, I paid the fees for my child. Am I eligible to receive a refund on my child's behalf?

A: Yes. Ensure you keep all Lincoln Academy emails and documentation so our office may verify your eligibility for a claim at a later date.

Q: I attend Brownstone Academy? Is Brownstone Academy shutting down also?

A: As of this time, no. Brownstone Academy must comply with the Agreed Final Judgment in order to remain open. You may wish to consult the State of Washington, which regulates Brownstone Academy, even though Brownstone Academy has operated primarily out of Houston.

Q: What do I do if my college or university denies or withdraws my federal financial aid?

A: Consult with the financial aid office at your college or university about alternatives for obtaining financial aid. You may need to obtain a GED to re-qualify.

Q: Are there other options besides the GED?

A: Sometimes local school districts (ISDs) offer alternative education options for students who want to complete their high school diplomas. Call your local school district to learn more. Remember to ask about “credit recovery” programs.

Q: How do I not get ripped off again?

A: Make sure you do not sign up with any online-only GED providers, especially online businesses promising to mail you a diploma. You may learn more by going to <http://texged.com/>.

Q: I thought Lincoln Academy was accredited. Why do schools/employers/the military/the police academy not accept Lincoln Academy diplomas?

A: Lincoln Academy’s accreditation was not legitimate. Lincoln Academy is a “diploma mill.” This means it offers a diploma for a fee with little or no coursework. The military, the police academy, and many schools and employers do not accept diploma mill diplomas.

Q: What should I do if Homeland Security/United States Citizenship and Immigration Services rejected my Deferred Action Childhood Arrival (DACA) Application because of my Lincoln Academy degree?

A: Lincoln Academy degrees do not meet Homeland Security requirements for DACA. You may wish to contact a private attorney for advice about your rights.